
THE
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Dictionary Magazine.

BIOGRAPHY.

A Sketch of the Life of Mrs. SARAH GILL, Consort of the late Lieutenant-Governor GILL; extracted from a Sermon preached by the Rev. John Hunt, in Boston, 1771; with an Account of her Religious Exercises, as expressed by her in her Diary.

IT is well known that the late Mrs. GILL, the person of whom I am speaking, was by her birth* not only entitled to singular advantages to furnish her mind with useful knowledge, but placed under the forming hand of an indulgent parent, who made it no more the business than the *pleasure* of his life to instil into her mind those principles of knowledge and piety which were so conspicuous in himself. Her singular improvements were highly to his satisfaction: she early in life discovered herself not only the ingenious but the serious mind, and as a specimen of it † soon made open profession of the Christian religion by attending the ordinances of the gospel in the church of which her honoured father was pastor, in connexion with the late venerable and justly esteemed Dr. SEWALL. Her numerous acquaintance can witness that she did honour to her profession, by her *exemplary* conduct, in the various departments of life to which she was called. From her first entrance into the marriage state she exhibited the bright example of an amiable wife, an endearing companion, and an indulgent mistress. Her natural inclination led her to books, and her many private papers discover a good acquaintance with them. A vein of piety spreads itself through them, which manifests the warm emotions of her mind, and that religion was both the business and pleasure of her life: and however she might distrust the genuineness of her religious exercises at certain seasons, yet their general course shews a mind under a deep habitual sense not only of the *reality* of the important truths of the gospel, but of

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* She was daughter to the late reverend and learned Mr. THOMAS PRINCE.

† At about 16 years of age.

their intrinsic *excellency* ; and that she felt such an efficacy in its doctrines and precepts, as made her rejoice in God, not so much as a means of safety from evil, as her only proper portion to *live on*.

During her last illness (which we know to be as severe as long-continued) the whole course of her conduct, amidst the obstinate struggles of animal nature, witnessed the singularly patient mind, and the resigned Christian. In this season, as she had full possession of her rational powers, time was given for the most serious recollection. "Death is no courtier ;" there is no jesting with a dying person : she viewed herself as such ; and gave growing evidence of the excellency of that religion she professed, in that it not only armed her with singular patience during a long and severe sickness, but made her rejoice at the thoughts of her dissolution. She declared herself a firm believer of the great doctrines of the gospel, trusted she in some degree felt their energy, and hoped to be an eternal monument of that grace of which she knew herself unworthy : and, although it is said her life has not only been circumspect, but exemplary, yet, but a few hours previous to her dissolution, she declared she laid no stress, separate from her connexion with our blessed Saviour, on her religious conduct or exercises of any kind, as having any moral efficacy to draw down the divine favour, but, discarding all other refuges, trusted solely and absolutely to that finished righteousness and atonement revealed in the gospel through our Lord Jesus Christ ; which fully coincided with a declaration in her diary, made many years since, "that she fled to the 'blood of the Lamb ;' on that she depended for pardon, cleansing, acceptance, and all her salvation." With the utmost calmness of mind, in full possession of her rational powers, and without the least perceptible struggle of animal nature, she made a happy exchange, we trust, of this life, for heavenly glory.

EXTRACTS FROM HER DIARY.

On Christian Magnanimity.

THIS life is a scene of trials. Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards. And as mankind in general, so Christians in particular, have troubles to grapple with. Their glorious Leader forewarned them of it in his last discourse : "In the world ye shall have tribulation." And as the Christian has oftentimes peculiar trials, so he has a peculiar way of *overcoming* them. There is doubtless such a thing as natural fortitude and greatness of mind. When persons of a calm and manly temper duly study the vicissitudes of human life, and, by comparing one thing with another, learn to set a just estimation on things, this will inspire them with contempt of many things which

which the less discerning shall esteem at a mighty rate ! Consequently he will bear up under the loss of what another shall account an insupportable evil. But Christian fortitude is quite another thing, rises from another principle, is cherished by other motives, and continued by other supports.

The principle from whence it arises is *religion*, or, a proper temper of mind towards God, and a just sense of *one's self*.

1. *A supreme regard to God* will dispose it to a calm, dutiful acquiescence in his will ; this will silence all murmurings, subdue all discontent, compose each undue inclination, humble the native pride of the human heart, and dispose it to a complacence in God as its portion and chief good. A branch of this religion consists in *faith*, a firm belief of the grand points of revelation, of the truth of the divine promises, the unchangeableness of the covenant, the veracity and ability of the Mediator of that covenant ; a fixed faith in the doctrine of a future state of retribution, when all things, which now appear disordered and irregular, will then be seen to have been conducted with the most admirable skill, the happiest connexion, and surprising harmony, to attain the wisest ends. This will cause it to triumph in the cross, while it looks not at seen but unseen things ; while it views the *eternal weight* of glory working out for it by means of affliction, *those afflictions* (however grievous to sense, and hard for reason to submit unto) will appear *light*, and but for a moment.

2. *A proper temper of mind towards one's self*, which can be found in none but a true Christian, will lead it to the exercise of *humility*. As a *creature*, a *mean creature*, it will feel its dependence on God ; hence be led to place its whole reliance on him, own its subjection to him, and resign to his government. When fore trials are upon it, this will be its language—" *It is THE LORD*, let him do as he pleases with his creature." Again, as it is a *sinful creature*, this proper temper will lead it to the exercise of *deep abasement* : it will be so far from resenting its afflictions as injuries, that it will patiently say with the Prophet, " I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him ;" and " wherefore shall a living man complain for the punishment of his sins" in a slight affliction *here*, whereas *those sins* really merit infinite punishment *hereafter* ! This will quiet the mind under deserved calamities ; for while it views the adorable justice, the spotless purity, and at the same time the wondrous patience, yea, long-suffering, of God towards it, how can it reply to him !

The *motives* by which it is continued are consonant to these principles—*A love to God*, to his will, providence and glory—to *its own spiritual advantage here*, and access of glory hereafter—the covenant and promises of support under, improvement of,
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and final deliverance from, all its afflictions. The *supports* by which it is cherished are the promises of the gospel, the fulness there is in Christ for it of grace and light, of holiness and comfort; the consolations and influences of the Spirit, and the believing prospect of a final conquest.

[*To be continued.*]

CONCERNING THE DUTY OF A CHURCH TO CENSURE ITS MEMBERS FOR THE SIN OF HERESY.

[*Continued from page 147.*]

BUT still it is to be expected that many will pay no regard to these arguments, until they see all the objections against censuring men for heresy fairly removed. This is an hard condition, which mankind always impose upon those who undertake to convince them of any truth which they are unwilling to believe. When they are willing to embrace any doctrine, they require nothing more than plain, conclusive arguments in favour of it: and it is commonly easy to convince their understandings, when their hearts are ready to receive conviction. But when any doctrine is disagreeable to their feelings, they will not be satisfied with the plainest and strongest arguments, unless the objections which arise from prejudice be completely taken away; and this it is often extremely difficult to effect, because prejudice is totally blind.

These observations more naturally and justly apply to the subject we are considering, than to almost any other point of controversy; and clearly show the arduous task still to be performed, in combating the numerous objections which prejudice and partiality have raised against censuring men for erroneous sentiments in religion.

Some say, that they cannot believe it to be right to censure any man for heresy, because it is impossible to define it, or ascertain wherein it consists. But is it not as easy to define error as truth? If there be a standard of truth, there is certainly a standard of error. It is allowed on all sides, that the Bible is the standard of truth, and of consequence it must be the standard of error, which is the opposite to truth. The church have a right to try the religious sentiments of every one of their members by this infallible rule; and they are just as capable of determining what are essential or fundamental errors, as what are essential or fundamental truths. If they can find one essential or fundamental truth in the Bible, then they may know that the denial of this truth is a fundamental error. Or if they can find five, or ten, or twenty, essential and fundamental truths, then they may know that the denial of any of these truths is a fundamental error. There is no more difficulty in discovering and ascer-

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taining heresy, than in discovering and ascertaining truth. Taking the word of God for a standard of truth and error, there is no more difficulty in determining what is heresy, than in determining what is immorality. As there are plain cases of immorality, so there are plain cases of heresy; and as there are doubtful cases of immorality, so there are doubtful cases of heresy. But it is no more necessary to determine all possible cases of heresy, in order to censure a person for one plain fundamental error, than it is necessary to determine all possible cases of immorality, in order to censure a person for a plain overt act of fraud or injustice. A church ought to judge of heresy as they do of immorality, by the word of God, and to be as strict in censuring men for gross heresy, as for gross immorality.

Some think it is wrong to censure men for heresy, because they have a right to judge for themselves in matters of religion, and to embrace what sentiments they please. It is undoubtedly true, that every man has a right to search the scriptures, and to embrace the doctrines which they contain, upon the evidence which they exhibit; but he has no right to judge wrong, and embrace error instead of truth. This may be illustrated by a familiar example. Paul had a right to judge for himself, whether Christ was the true Messiah. He was not obliged to believe this upon the mere opinion or report of others. It was his duty to examine the evidence which Christ exhibited of his being the Son of God and Saviour of the world, and to believe according to evidence. But he had no right to reject the clear evidence of his being the Messiah, and to treat him as an impostor. Though every man has a right to judge according to evidence, yet no man has a right to judge contrary to it. It is absurd to suppose, that God should require men to believe the truths contained in his word, and yet give them a right to reject them at their pleasure. The Bible is superior to any man's private judgment, therefore the church have a divine warrant to censure any of its members for holding sentiments contrary to that infallible standard of truth.

Some object against censuring men for heresy, because the human mind is so framed that it is constrained to believe in every case exactly as it does, and of consequence no man can be justly condemned for his faith. This objection is founded upon a false supposition that the *heart* is never concerned in believing or disbelieving. There are, indeed, some mathematical and speculative truths, which carry conviction *in spite* of the *heart*; but the heart is always concerned in believing or disbelieving all truths of a *moral nature*. So far as the heart is concerned in believing or disbelieving truths of this kind, a man merits either praise or blame. The belief of some errors is as clear an evidence of a corrupt heart, as the practice of some vices. Whenever, therefore,

a church find any member guilty of gross and fundamental errors, they have a good right to cut him off, as unworthy of their Christian charity and communion.

It is sometimes said, that nothing short of infallibility can qualify a church to censure any man for heresy, and no Protestant church will pretend that they possess this divine prerogative. If there were no difference between infallibility and total ignorance, there would be great force in this objection; but there is a wide difference between them. Infallibility implies an *impossibility* of erring in judgment, but fallibility implies both a *possibility* of judging wrong, and a *possibility* of judging right. Fallible men may know something, though they do not know every thing; and they may sometimes judge right, though they may sometimes judge wrong. Fallibility is by no means inconsistent with certainty, but admits of every degree of absolute knowledge which falls short of omniscience. A fallible church, therefore, may be well qualified, in point of knowledge, to judge of the most important doctrines of the gospel, and to censure those who deny them. It no more requires infallibility in a church to censure a man for heresy, than for immorality. Who will say, that one Christian may not with propriety blame and rebuke another for his criminal conduct? Paul required Titus to rebuke the erroneous sharply, "that they might be found in the faith." And Paul himself blamed and rebuked Peter for allowing the Jews to observe the laws of Moses, which were superseded and abrogated by the gospel. If one fallible Christian may justly blame and rebuke another, then, for the same reason, on fallible church may not only blame and rebuke, but censure and excommunicate, one of their members, either for immorality or heresy. It would be strange indeed, if a whole church, though destitute of infallibility, should not have knowledge sufficient to detect and censure a gross error of a private brother.

It is often said, the apostle Paul disclaimed all dominion over the faith of Christians, and so should every church, and never presume to censure their members for erroneous sentiments. It is true, he tells the Christians, "We have no dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy." But what did he mean by this declaration? It is evident he meant no more than this, that he did not require them to place an implicit faith in him, or to believe what he taught, without examining and seeing the evidence of truth for themselves. But this was very different from giving them a license to reject the doctrines he taught, after they had examined the evidence upon which they were founded. He meant to disclaim that dominion over the faith of Christians, which the Pope exercises when he commands them to believe what he asserts, whether true or false, upon pain
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of damnation. But he might disclaim this arbitrary power, and yet require Christians to believe truth, and reject error, upon proper evidence. And we find that he did *in fact* exercise this authority over the professors of Christianity; for he tells Timothy that he had actually censured Hymeneus and Alexander for making shipwreck of the faith. Hence no objection can be fairly drawn, from either his precepts or examples, against censuring men for heresy.

[*To be concluded in our next.*]

LETTERS ON SOLITARY DEVOTION,

From PASCAL to JULIA.

LETTER III.

THERE are several considerations which are furnished in the scriptures, My dear Julia, which may with propriety operate as very powerful inducements to engage us to much strictness in the duty of prayer.

In the first place, there is something powerfully attractive in that character which our Maker is pleased to assume in this respect. It is that of a prayer-hearing God. Says the Psalmist, "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come." In the 45th chapter of Isaiah are these memorable words: "I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth. I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain." Our blessed Lord, on the occasion of raising Lazarus from the dead, says to his Father, "I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I know that thou hearest me always." These passages assure us of the perfect disposition of our Heavenly Father to hear, and that he does actually hear, with infinite propitiousness, all prayer. Surely there is something very endearing and inviting in this character: especially when it is considered, that we are guilty creatures, that we have forfeited all such indulgence, and have provoked him to treat us with inexorable displeasure by the flagrant manner in which we have obstinately refused to hear the overtures of his grace? Could we wonder if he should swear in his wrath, that he never would hear us, let our needs be ever so great, and our agony ever so extreme? But, without being induced to treat us in this manner, he is found assuming, and constantly manifesting himself to us under, the character of a prayer-hearing God. O! had we but hearts to feel what the moral beauty of this character is calculated to inspire, we should be drawn irresistibly to this duty. The moral instruction of the parable of the Prodigal Son is so persuasive in this respect, that I cannot omit suggesting it. "But when he was yet a great way off his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran,

ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." Is it so? Does God meet every returning, praying creature with such an affectionate welcome? Does he hear so promptly the first broken sigh of the reconciled soul? Then you will agree with me that the sinner must have a very hard heart indeed who can refuse to pray. But,

Secondly, as an illustration of this character, we have presented in the scriptures innumerable promises that all prayer shall be certainly heard. When I say, *all prayer*, you cannot understand me as meaning to comprehend the prayer of the hypocrite. No. It is impossible but that this should be an abomination. "God heareth not sinners." That goodness of God which disposes him to hear penitent prayer, must dispose him to abhor, and shut his ears against, impenitent prayer. By all prayer I mean, all dutiful, affectionate prayer. And it is such prayer only that I am recommending to you. Now, with respect to this, it is expressly declared, "Ask, and it shall be given you, seek, and ye shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him who knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him:—And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive:—And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name I will do it." I might multiply many more such express promises. But it must be needless. These are conclusive in determining the success of all prayer. If these promises do not lead us to abound in this duty, we certainly must be beyond the reach of motive.

Thirdly, we have the examples of all good men in every period of the world who have gone before us in the diligent practice of this duty, and especially the example of our Redeemer. He spent whole nights in prayer. Prayer was his element. There is something very alluring to an ingenuous mind in the example of the good and the beloved. We seem to be constrained to imitation. The example of our Lord is recommended by every moving consideration. These examples I had occasion to notice in my last, in reference to prayer as a *general duty*; but as they are particularly in point here, I cannot forbear to advert to them again. Whatever he did is powerfully recommended to us, because *He* did it. Let us, my dear Julia, feel the constraining power of this example. If we do so, we cannot be remiss in the article of secret devotion. Its importance

tance to your usefulness, to your progress in religion, and to your personal comfort, I shall make the subject of my next letter.

In the mean time I am, &c.

LETTER IV.

ALLOWING, my dear Julia, all the weight that is due to your own discreet observations on the importance of an habitual solitary devotion, I think it may be of great use to you for me to fix, if possible, more indelibly in your mind, a just view of its importance by such remarks as have occurred to me in the course of my reading and experience. One great object with a benevolent mind is, to be as useful as possible to others. What is life worth, unless it can be usefully employed? Of what value are our intellectual talents, energies and improvements, unless they can be directed to promote the lasting advantage of our fellow mortals? Those capacities fit us to embrace a social good. And if we feel that generous, disinterested love, which is the principle of the new creature, our chief concern will centre in the good of others. To understand accurately what is their proper good, or wherein real usefulness consists, is an interesting article of true knowledge. Were we to form our conclusions on the authority of the maxims and manners of the world, we should remain of the opinion, that the cultivation of certain exterior accomplishments, fitting us to play off the tricks of an artful dissimulation, and to figure in fashionable circles, was the most useful exercise of our understandings. But the real good of man consists, not in the influence he has over the wayward passions of others, but in the knowledge and enjoyment of God. There is no truer aphorism than that of the scripture, that "To know God and Jesus Christ is life eternal." "It is the misery of man that he is morally divorced from God, and is left to wander in the mazes of vain expectation and pursuit. It is his true felicity to be brought back to a humble acquaintance with him. This is in fact his sole concern. No intellectual improvement is valuable any farther than it is subservient to this great end. The highest proficiency in literature, or a proud worldly philosophy, is an empty acquisition when in-subordinate to this object. To dress, and jaunt about, the mere child of passion, and to fly from pleasure to pleasure, as do the greatest part of the gay world, or more laboriously to do nothing, is quite unworthy of a creature bound for immortality. True usefulness then consists in the moral recovery of sinners to the knowledge of God; in bringing back the minds of our partners in guilt to virtue, to purity, to a preparedness for glory. If I can instrumentally pour divine knowledge into the mind of a lost sinner, gain his attention to religious considerations, win his heart, and present him as a chaste virgin to Christ,

I bestow on him an infinitely greater good, than if I enriched him with all the wealth of the universe. Subordinate to this, the generous Christian may be kindly and usefully employed in discharging the offices of domestic life, in wiping away the tear of grief from the sorrowing eye, administering to the necessitous, and aiding the peaceful exit of the dying. Your tender heart, my dear Julia, beats high, I know, to spend the sequel of your life in this amiable manner. Balls and songs, the food of selfish minds, have lost all their charms to you, since the loveliness of Christian virtue was presented to your spiritual discernment, by that Hand which at a single stroke spread on the canvass of nature all its beauties. I see, or think I see, the tear of this generous compassion start from your eye. I hear you exclaim, O let me thus live to God. Let me, like my dear Jesus, go about doing good. Let me be instrumental in bringing some lost sinners to thy bosom, O Immanuel! But, my Julia, that you may have a heart to go about this work, to persevere in it, to be fortified against all the discouragements and obstacles you will meet, and to succeed in it, you will need to employ yourself much in the exercises of importunate prayer. How apt are our hearts to falter in the prosecution of duty! How naturally does a stupid indifference creep upon us! In what danger are we from those numerous examples of moral apathy which are around us! How liable to hide our talent in the earth! To be awake to duty, to be disposed to search out the cause we know not, to arrest every opportunity of advancing the great object of our existence, we have need of the energy of the Holy Spirit; we need to be propelled by a special divine influence; which influence we should therefore most earnestly and constantly supplicate. Prayer is not the cause, but it is the procuring medium, of this grace; through which it flows, and without which no considerable degree of it can be expected to exist in our hearts. Habitual devotion will, besides, generally be accompanied with that sweet serenity of mind, and tenderness of love, which give to all benevolent efforts that peculiar power to convince, to win and to subdue, which I dare say you must have admired in a few of your most amiable Christian acquaintance. It keeps at the same time in the view of the mind those grand and all-important concerns of eternity, which are the most efficacious motives to benevolent action. On this principle, it may be laid down as a Christian maxim, that a devotional life will, other things being equal, be the most useful life. To these considerations might be pertinently added, that of the efficacy of prayer in drawing down divine blessings upon those for whom we intercede. This is a contribution which charity naturally makes, and is one of her best gifts. "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Then prayer it-
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self is the most useful service. It is pouring in oil and wine into the wounds of our spiritually diseased fellow creatures, when they would otherwise perish. It is procuring for them interminable benefits, when they are perhaps wholly insensible of it. We ascribe much to the active efforts of some zealous champions of the faith. But possibly the retired, devotional importunity of an obscure child of grace, like Lydia of Thyatira, or Miss Anthony, will be found to have operated more propitiously still in aid of the dear kingdom of Christ. While I am thus urging the usefulness of spending much of your time in exercises of devotion, I must not forget to mention the joy which evidence of an uncommon degree of this spirit in you will give to the whole circle of your pious friends. They all love you; and they love religion more. Their felicity depends not a little upon you. If you are known to be careless in performing the duties of religion, your carelessness will afflict them. If you appear to them to have the familiarity of a child with God; if you appear to hold a feeling intercourse with the invisible world; if they see you aspiring, in the labours of faith, after the holy felicities of heaven; you will be more and more lovely in their eyes. You will be an object of pleasing consideration to them. Conversation respecting you will enliven their hearts, and prompt them to imitation. They will bless God for what they see in you of the fruits of the Spirit. Thus, as an object of thought, as an example of unaffected goodness, you will contribute to promote the pious joy of your acquaintance, and spread abroad the honour of divine grace.

Other engagements oblige me to close this letter, before I have said all that I wished to observe to you on the importance of your adorning your profession in this respect. Other remarks shall be given to you in my next.

I am, &c.

THE IMMUTABILITY OF GOD ILLUSTRATED.

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IT may not be improper, previously to proceeding to the inferences and remarks in contemplation, to notice some of those passages of scripture which seem to exhibit the Divine Being in a different light from those above mentioned. Of these the following are a specimen:—Gen. vi. 6. *It repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.* 1 Sam. xv. 35. *The Lord repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.* Jonah iii. 10. *God repented of the evil that he said he would do unto them, and he did it not.*

Although these texts, and others of similar import, at first view seem to represent God as a mutable being, yet they are doubtless

doubtless consistent with *perfect immutability*. To understand them, it is necessary to know what is meant by *repentance* as it respects God. If it mean precisely the same, when applied to him, as it does when applied to men, he is *indeed* a mutable being. For repentance in men implies a radical change in the moral exercises of their minds; or, in other words, a change from the love and practice of sin, to the love and practice of holiness. Sinners, antecedently to repentance, love sin. It is suited to the taste and relish of their hearts, and its practice affords them gratification. While this is their character, holiness is disagreeable, and they derive pleasure neither from its joys nor employments. But when repentance takes place, their feelings undergo a total change with regard to sin. They then loathe and hate it, as the greatest of all evils: its practice becomes unpleasant and disagreeable, and they forsake it: holiness becomes pleasant and agreeable, and they practise it. Thus repentance in men implies an essential change in their moral character and conduct. But it is utterly impossible that God should thus repent; for he never did love and practise sin, and therefore never can turn from the love and practice of it. Repentance of sin, or turning from the love and practice of it, necessarily supposes that the person who thus repents and turns did previously love and practise sin. But the infinitely good God never did love and practise sin, but has from eternity hated sin, and loved holiness. These affections are inseparable from his nature, and therefore imply no change, but are consistent with absolute immutability. But, notwithstanding God has from eternity loved holiness, and hated sin, and notwithstanding it is impossible for him to undergo any essential change of mind towards these different objects, yet, since rational creatures may experience such an essential moral change as is implied in turning from the love and practice of holiness to the love and practice of sin, and from the love and practice of sin to the love and practice of holiness, God's conduct towards them may vary as often and to as great a degree as they experience such moral changes. Such changes as these are consistent with absolute immutability. Indeed the former are as essential to the perfection of the divine character as the latter. Had God's mind and conduct towards the angels who kept not their first estate, and towards mankind before and after the apostacy, been precisely the same, they would have proved him to be a very imperfect and sinful being. It is essential to the perfection of his moral character that he should possess and manifest different exercises towards holy and unholy beings. This does not suppose, however, that he has any new perceptions and feelings respecting sin and holiness, or that there is the least alteration in any one of his perfections. For he knew from eternity that the

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period would arrive in which intelligent creatures possessing specifically different moral characters would exist, and, as early, intended that they should receive different treatment. But as the idea to which we are now attending is highly important, let us examine some of those texts which represent God as repenting and changing, and see whether they imply any thing more than different exercises towards his creatures in consequence of the changes they experience. "It repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." This, most certainly, does not imply that God repented, in the sense in which sinners repent when they turn from the love and practice of sin to the love and practice of holiness, for he had not been the subject of sin. Nor does it imply that he began then to hate sin; for he had hated it from eternity. But it implies that he felt differently towards mankind from what he did in their primitive state, and that he was determined to treat them differently. So long as Adam retained his primeval rectitude, he was an object of the divine approbation; but as soon as he apostatised he became an object of the divine displeasure. Man, not God, was the subject of change. In consequence of this change in Adam, God banished him from the blissful garden of Eden; which he never would have done had he remained innocent. While the fallen angels continued holy, they were objects of the divine favour; but the moment they changed their feelings towards God, he changed his conduct towards them. When the antediluvian world, with reference to whom the text now under consideration was more immediately spoken, had been universally corrupt, God threatened their ruin as follows: "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast—for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." From this it appears that repentance when applied to God is a change of divine conduct towards moral creatures as they change. For why did God threaten to destroy men from the face of the earth? This threatening never would have proceeded from the mouth of the Lord, if Adam and the whole human race had remained in a state of holiness, obedient to the law of God. Its repenting the Lord therefore that he had made man expresses his utter disapprobation of the sin of men, and his change of conduct towards them, and his determination therefore to destroy man from the face of the earth. Hereby God expresses his hatred to all iniquity; and this is essential to the moral character of the Supreme Being. But this change of divine conduct towards creatures does not in any degree or in any sense affect the divine immutability. For this change of divine conduct does not arise from any change in the Divine Mind, but from a change or diversity of the moral characters of his creatures.

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Since it is essential to the moral character of God to love righteousness, and hate iniquity, he will love his rational creatures so long as they continue holy; but as soon as they cease to be holy, and become the subjects of sin, instead of continuing the objects of his complacency, they become the objects of his displeasure. In like manner, as soon as those who have heretofore been totally corrupt reform, and become the subjects of real holiness, they will share in the divine approbation; and his love to them will always be proportionate to their benevolence. Hence, when sinners repent and reform, God is said to repent of the evil which he thought to do unto them. He then averts those evils which he otherwise would have inflicted.—These observations are illustrated in the following passage, contained in the eighteenth of Jeremiah: “At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them.”

That the preceding explanation of *repentance*, when used with application to the infinite JEHOVAH, harmonizes with sacred scripture, is further evident from his conduct towards the inhabitants of Nineveh. God said unto Jonah, “Arise, go into Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it, for their wickedness is come up before me. And Jonah began to enter into the city a day’s journey, and he cried and said, Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown.” But when the forty days had expired, Nineveh was not overthrown; for God repented of the evil which he thought to do unto them. But in what sense did he repent? Let the inspired narrative answer: “So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him in sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing; let them not feed nor drink water. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?” Here we see that an important change took place among the profligate, abandoned inhabitants of Nineveh. There was undoubtedly a general exter-

nal reformation; and we have reason to believe that many became the subjects of repentance unto life. In consequence of this change in them, God did not execute that awful destruction which he threatened by the mouth of his prophet. Hence we read, "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way, and God repented of the evil that he said he would do unto them, and he did it not." It must be evident, to all who suitably attend to the subject, that the repentance which God manifested upon this occasion did not imply the least change in his character, but only a change of dispensations towards his creatures, in consequence of their repentance or change. The observations which have been made will elucidate those other passages of scripture in which God is represented as the subject of repentance. He is subject to no change. He is the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever. We shall close our remarks, upon this part of the subject, by the following quotation from a celebrated author: "When, upon the reformation of sinners, God is said to repent of the evil which he had threatened against them, this intimates no more than that he suits his dispensations to the alterations which take place in the character of men. His disposition towards good and evil continues the same, but varies in its application, as its objects vary; just as the laws themselves, which are capable of no change of affection, bring rewards or punishments at different times to the same person, according as his behaviour alters. Immutability is indeed so closely connected with the notion of supreme perfection, that wherever any rational conceptions of Deity have taken place, this attribute has been ascribed to him"

HORATIO.

[*To be continued.*]

ACCOUNT OF LEVI AMES,

WHO WAS EXECUTED IN BOSTON FOR BURGLARY, OCT. 1773.

To the Editors of the Massachusetts Missionary Magazine.

GENTLEMEN,

THE following account of LEVI AMES is extracted from the Sermon which was preached on the Sabbath after his execution. It is sent to you, hoping that you will give it a place in your useful Magazine, and that it may be a mean of quickening saints in prayer for sinners, and in praise to God for his sovereign grace. And who knows but that some sinner may be awakened by it, and be led to look to the mercy of God through Jesus Christ unto eternal life?

For the information of those who have not seen the sermon,

I would observe, that this person early in life began to steal; which sinful practice he followed, until he was apprehended for breaking open a house in Boston: at which place he was executed, Oct. 21, 1773, at the age of twenty-one.

IOTA.

AFTER his condemnation, there was a remarkable concern for him on the minds of many of the children of God, both ministers and private Christians; who seemed to be favoured with an uncommon spirit of prayer for his salvation. Many supplications ascended to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ from day to day for *poor Ames*, that he might be a monument of sovereign mercy, and die in faith. Nor was this the only way in which they discovered their real regards for him. He was visited by my fathers and brethren in the ministry, of both town and country, and by many private Christians of different denominations. Kindnesses were shewn him from various quarters; nor was he insensible of the obligations he was under to his benefactors.

“Having received a message from him acquainting me that he desired a visit, I went to see him; and found him seemingly stupid, with but little to say: nor did he appear to be so affected with his condition as a *condemned malefactor*, as one would reasonably have expected. This was the state of his mind the first visits I made him. I endeavoured to lay before him, in as plain a manner as possible, the nature of the divine law, under which he was as a man, and to the curse of which he stood most justly exposed by his transgressions: knowing that *by the law is the knowledge of sin*. He owned that he was a great sinner, and deserved to be cast off; but did not appear to have any proper views of his sinful nature and life. Some days after, his conscience seemed to be in some measure alarmed, and he discovered unusual uneasiness, and assured me, that ‘he did not know what to do. I have lived such a life, that I can have no hope from that, that God will have mercy on me: and my time is so short, that I can do no good works to go heaven by.’ Thus he was perplexed, not knowing by what method God would save him. An attempt was made to open the gospel to him, or the way of salvation through the complete redemption of Christ; and he was directed to the holy scriptures, as containing the whole will of God, respecting both the ruin and recovery, the law and gospel. But, omitting much that passed, I would observe, that at a certain time I found him in keen distress from a sense of his sinful condition; when he declared that he saw himself: ‘Yes, (said he) ‘I *feel* that I am lost! I sometimes think that I am given over to destruction, and that there is no mercy for me. I am undone in soul and body. If I go to the place of execution as I am now, they must drag me like a bullock

bullock to the slaughter. Oh, must I die so! I am like a man that made a great fire, and then run right into it. So I have done; I have run from God, and must be damned, if God will not have mercy on me! May I not have a little longer time than is now fixed? At this time he appeared to have very clear views of the justice of God in condemning him, should that be the case. 'I see (said he) that if God could damn me a thousand times, he would be just; I never did any thing but sin against him.' Thus I left him, confident that neither men nor angels could help him; and that God would have mercy on whom he would have mercy.

"In this distressed state of mind he continued until Friday evening, the 8th of October; when, according to his own account of the matter, he was unexpectedly relieved, in good measure, by Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27—'A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh,' &c. Upon hearing that, the prisoner appeared easy in his mind. I called to see him, being desirous to know what was the occasion of it; and not without fears, lest he should compass himself with sparks of his own kindling. Upon conversing with him, he said, 'I feel my mind peaceable; such a peace as I never knew any thing of in my life before. I was turning over a little book which was put into my hands, and cast my eye on these words, *A new heart will I give you*, &c. It struck me; it came as if it was a promise to me. I wanted this *new heart*; for my heart was bad, bad indeed. This was God's promise. I knew that God could not lie; and therefore, if I would not believe this, I would believe nothing. I was now sure that God could give me a new heart—Oh! that is what I most wanted; and I could not get it: but God hath let me see that he gives it.' He said several things about the grace of God in *giving* a new heart, a right spirit, &c. and particularly discovered the view he had of the enmity of his own heart against God, in the following sentence: 'I now see that I have sinned against God all my life, with as much *envy* as ever I killed a snake, which I always had the greatest hatred to.' He at this time spoke of his former contempt of the gospel with evident sorrow; and expressed his gratitude to all those who had visited him with a view of making him acquainted with the way of salvation through Christ. 'This (said he) I never knew any thing of before, though I have always lived in this land, where the gospel is.' From the time mentioned above, until his death, he had much to say about the words of the apostle John—'The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin.' This seemed to dwell in his mind; and on this truth he assured me he rested all his hopes, or his soul, guilty as it was.

"The Saturday morning before his death I was with him. When he was brought into the room, I observed that his countenance appeared serene; rather pleasant. I asked him how he did as to the state of his mind. His answer was, as nearly as I can recollect, 'Comfortable; I want to be with Christ: he is glorious, and I am sinful.'

"The afternoon before his execution, I found him much terrified with the prospect of the *manner* of his death: he trembled, and thus expressed himself: 'I think I see myself hanging up before the people.' But this fear soon subsided; and, at his own desire, he had three Christian friends to spend the night with him: by whom I have been informed of his behaviour through the night, and the manner in which they employed their time.

"When they went into the room he had the Bible in his hand; and, being asked how he was, he said, 'I am easy;' and began to read the third chapter of John; and when he came to the words of Christ concerning the *new birth*, he stopped, and testified that he had reason to think that God had given him to know by experience what he was: he said several things respecting his view of the excellency of God, and the evil of sin; and thought, as far as he knew his heart, that he did love God for his own worthiness, and hate sin because contrary to God; and assured the company that he hated his own evil thoughts, and wanted to be freed from all sin; crying out at times, 'If I am not right, I hope God will put me right. I see (said he) that, if I could be admitted into heaven with this body of sin, I could not be happy; I know I must be like God; I must be holy.' He slept none all night; and at times used the following expressions: 'O what should I do if it was not for Jesus Christ! wonderful goodness and love of God! How have we sinned against him!' The company prayed with him alternately; and he, at their desire, prayed also. In his address to God, he appeared sensible of his unspeakable guilt, and affected with the wonderful way of salvation by Christ; and earnestly begged that the Lord would be with him in his last hours: nor did he forget to pray for his friends, and his enemies. In the morning he declared that he had a pleasant night, appeared resigned, and bid his friends farewell with calmness, never expecting to see them on earth again.

"At nine o'clock that morning (which was the day of his execution) at his request I visited him, found him solemn and composed, considering the circumstances in which he was, and had much conversation with him, in the presence of four or five persons of serious character. His views of himself, and of redemption by Christ, were the same as are mentioned before; therefore it is needless to repeat them. At this time, he more
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than once said, 'I hope I am right, and shall not deceive myself: on Christ alone I rest; if I perish, I will perish at his feet.'

"But I come now to the conversation that I had with him as we walked in solemn pace to the place of death.

"About two o'clock he came out of the prison yard, attended with all the awful formalities of execution; his arms pinioned, and the halter about his neck; following the cart in which were his coffin and the ladder. Gladly would I have been excused from this painful office; but the youth's importunity, and a sense of duty, forbade me to decline it. I therefore stepped up to him, and thus addressed him: 'Ames, how do you feel under your present circumstances?' The answer was not a little surprising—'I feel composed; I am not afraid: what can make me feel so? could it be if I had not a good hope?' This naturally led me to enter upon a familiar consideration of the nature of 'a good hope': such as, that hope is the expectation of enjoying a certain good at a future period—that a *good hope* of eternal life, or happiness hereafter, is a gift of God—that it has for its foundation the righteousness of Christ—that the man who has a good hope has been made sensible of his guilt and helplessness, and, from a view of Christ as the ground of his hope, has been enabled to fly to him, and cast himself upon him, expecting the blessing hoped for wholly as a free gift, he being unworthy, and having nothing to bring as a price in his hand: further, that where this divine hope is there will be such gracious exercises of mind as these—Hatred of sin, sin of heart and life, because of its opposition to God—a prevailing desire to be perfectly free from all sin, and like to God: with much to the same purpose, &c. He listened with a solemn attention; and when I had done, he said, 'I know that there is no other salvation but Christ; on him I rest my soul; and think I can say I hate sin, because God hates it; and do long to be made holy—I see that if I had sinned but once, and could live a thousand years, and pray and read all that time, I could not make amends for that one sin—I can have no hope but Christ—If ever I enter into heaven, it will be by the free grace of God. It can only be by the mercy of God, because I never did a good thing in all my life: I have done nothing but sin against God.'

"He discovered no anxiety about his body, or the death he was to die, all the way to the gallows, except once; which I think was occasioned by the falling of the end of the halter from under his arm. He caught it up, and said, 'Did I ever think that I should have such a thing about my neck?' To which I replied, 'Ames, how could you expect any thing else from your manner of life? Did you not tell me, that you once passed the gallows with stolen goods under your arm, and thought then
that

that you should die there, if you did not leave off stealing?" "O yes, I did. True, true. But is there not yet hope for such a sinner? Is not the blood of Christ sufficient to cleanse me from all sin? On that I trust." Several times by the way he affectionately said the words of David in a short prayer to the Lord; *Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts; and see what wicked way is in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!* I also observed him breathe out his soul to God, as we walked, in these words—"O Lord, make me holy."

I asked him how his *past life* appeared to him—To which he said, 'Bad, bad beyond all account—my sins frighten me, they are so many and great.' But still he rested on that sacred declaration, *The blood of Christ cleanseth from ALL sin.*

"He asked several questions about the way of access to God the Father through Christ; and concerning the distinction between the Father and the Son: also whether I thought that the souls of the wicked at death would appear before God to receive the sentence of condemnation; or whether they would immediately pass to hell, and wait their doom at the day of judgment? To all which I answered him. These questions were asked, and the answers attended to, with an astonishing composure.

"He mentioned with astonishment the horrors of conscience he had been under, at a certain time while in prison; and expressed his wonder at God's goodness to him, and his gratitude also that he now enjoyed such an agreeable composure of mind; and would ask, 'How can it be? I hope I am not deceived!'

"By this time, we came in sight of the gallows; I designedly took no notice of it, but watched the prisoner to see how he would behave, expecting that the sight of it would give him a shock. But he looked up and said, 'There is the gallows; and I shall soon know, dear Sir, more than you.' I asked him how his mind was at the near approach of dissolution. 'I feel composed,' said he.

We were now hindered from further conversation by the pressing of the multitude, who were all desirous to be as near the prisoner as possible. Upon coming under the gallows, he was ordered to get into the cart, and to stand up while the warrant for his execution was read. After which he sat down on his coffin, and I asked him, as the solemn period was at hand when he would launch into eternity, how things appeared to him. As for his heart and life, he declared, shaking his head at the same time, that they were 'bad, dreadful bad; that he could have no hope, if it was not for Jesus Christ: but that he thought there was infinite safety in him.'

"I asked him whether he was sensible of this truth respecting Christ; and whether he had reason to think he could trust his guilty

guilty soul on him. He answered, 'O yes, there is no other way ; where else can I hope ? I want no other hope—'The blood of Christ cleanseth from *all* sin.' O that I may be right !' I then prayed with him, and after prayer took an affectionate leave of him. At parting, he assured me that his mind remained in the same state. I then retired a few steps from him, leaving him to the exercise of his own thoughts. He laid his head on his coffin for some time, then kneeled down by it, and prayed softly. But it now being within fifteen minutes of the time fixed for his execution, he was ordered to stand upon his coffin : he obeyed at once. Being now tied up, and waiting the last minute, he addressed the people in a few words—' Look at me, a sight enough to melt a heart of stone. I am going to die for my wickedness. But the death I am to die is nothing compared with the death of Jesus Christ on the cross ; for they pierced his hands and his side with a spear. O take warning by me—If you were my own brethren, near to me as my own soul, I could only tell you to beware of stealing, swearing, drinking,' &c. He asked how long he had to live ; and, being told, he addressed himself in a solemn prayer to God : among other expressions, I recollect the following : ' Lord, have mercy on me, the worst of sinners. I can only stand at a distance, and say, God be merciful to me a sinner. Lord, it is better to trust in thee, than to put confidence in man : it is better to trust in thee, than to put confidence in princes. If I perish, Lord Jesus, I will perish at thy feet : but the blood of Christ cleanseth from *all* sin.' There were many other expressions which he used in this last address to God, that appeared to me really suitable to his case. He again asked how long he had to live, and was answered, five minutes. He desired to know when the time was out ; and, looking wishfully at the sun, he said, ' That sun is almost down, but before it sets I shall be in eternity, where I never was.' And pulling the cap over his eyes, he cried out, Lord Jesus, into thy hands I commend my spirit.' As he finished this sentence, he was turned off, and died with great ease.

" I have only now to add, that, both before and since the execution of the unhappy youth, I made inquiry respecting his latter conduct ; and have been informed, more than once, by the family who daily observed him, that they never saw so great an alteration for the better in the temper and conduct of any man, in so short a time, as in this youth. And, as far as he had opportunity, he discovered a readiness to forgive, and to do a kindness for, his worst enemy. Thus he said he could cheerfully and heartily forgive the person who, he declared, had sworn falsely against him on his trial, relative to his *first* entering the house of Mr. Bicker. Nor did he only forgive him,

him, but when any of the neighbours sent him victuals, he said, 'I can't eat it; carry it to A——, he wants it.' This was an evidence of a Christian temper. Upon the whole, I cannot but think that he died a *penitent thief*.

"Thus I have, at the warm sollicitations of some of my friends, given an account of the exercise of mind of the late Levi Ames. They who, with the author, think that he died in faith, will admire this display of divine grace, and carefully ascribe all the glory to God; knowing that it is God who worketh in us, to *will* and to *do*, of his good pleasure."

RELIGIOUS CONFERENCE.

[Continued from p. 134.]

CONFERENCE IV.

Clerus. **T**HE prospect of advantage from the conference brightens: for we not only find the number of members increasing, but the spirit of religious inquiry highly reputable, and approved by young people of distinction. I have lately heard of several youthful persons, within the circle, who have forsaken the company of infidels, and are deeply impressed with the evidence of special inspiration. Others are the subjects of deep concern and conviction relative to their moral and future state.

Lucinda. The information is the most agreeable. I have also heard of several of the same description in our vicinity: and I cannot but hope that God has a special blessing in reserve for poor Sophia, who is absent on a visit at Exeter. The arrows of conviction have deeply penetrated her mind. She feels condemned, and her aspiring hopes of a worldly nature are prostrate.

Eusebia. God grant that she may find no relief but in Christ, the portion of believers. Poor girl, I heartily pity her, and tremble at her danger. She stands on the precipice.

Clerus. How thankful ought we to feel for these tokens of good! But let us resume the subject of inspiration, which was before the last conference; and examine it in a different attitude.

Leander. We are pleased with the topic; and shall gratefully adopt your method of process.

Clerus. To ascertain whether the Bible is a system of divine inspiration, we must bring the evidence to the test before the bar of reason and impartial inquiry.

Leander.

Leander. But how shall this be done in the most advantageous manner? For it is a fact that men of equal ability and information are differently impressed with the same arguments and objects. What is more common than diversity of opinions about divine things? On what principle shall we account for it?

Clerus. The causes of various opinions and creeds are numerous. Different interests, inclinations, habits and associates; different capacities, and different modes of education; are among the motives and causes of theological diversity. But, though the informed world is full of diversity of opinion about religious things; though men are the subjects of various opinions and creeds, in consequence of causes easily ascertained; though they are often deluded, deceived and gulled by artful impostors; yet, in other circumstances and conditions, they are incapable of being deceived, or of embracing falsehood instead of truth.

Leander. Please, sir, to furnish an instance which is proof against deception and imposition: for I have rather been in the habit of concluding that men are capable of being deceived and cheated whenever it comports with the interest of impostors.

Clerus. Not so, Leander; you are not correct in your conclusion; as will appear from the following infallible method of establishing matters of fact, contained in a useful treatise, which has relieved many young persons perplexed with deistical objections. Truth and falsehood are so diverse that they are capable of being manifestly ascertained and discriminated from each other. Truth, like the morning light, shines with increasing lustre: but falsehood, like the momentary meteor, will not bear examination. That shines to endure; this blazes but to die.

Leander. What are the infallible criterions to which you particularly refer?

Clerus. 1. "When the eyes and ears and other bodily senses are judges of the matter of fact:

2. When it is done publicly in the face of the world:

3. When public monuments are erected, and public memorials are observed, to perpetuate the fact: and,

4. When these perpetuating monuments and observances are instituted at the time the matter of fact exists, and uniformly continued."

There are thousands of facts, disputed by none, which are destitute of the concurrent influence of these criterions. Many human actions derive no testimony from the two last. But when an action is done which unites and combines all these criterions, that action is proof against the possibility of deception or imposition.

Leander.

Leander. Is this your meaning, that those actions which are performed before the eyes of men, and which are performed publicly, and which from the time of performance are perpetuated by answerable monuments and ceremonies, are so manifestly shielded with genuineness that they cannot be disputed?

Clerus. Yes, Leander; the infidel may as successfully deny his own existence, as dispute actions of this description. They command and extort belief. What we publicly see and hear, and inscribe on tables of stone at the time of action, is not only true in the view of all surrounding spectators, but will be equally true in the view of all succeeding generations. It will endure forever.

Leander. I don't see, sir, but you are just: but please to proceed and exemplify the operative influence of these criterions: for theory, destitute of practice, will not avail.

Clerus. What we see and hear, while our organs are regular and good, we know is matter of fact; and what they declare is false, cannot be true. The testimony of sense is the test. For instance, no impostor can induce men of this generation to believe that we are now making our escape from the persecution of Britain, and passing through the Atlantic dry shod, or that we are at this moment taking possession of America in the face of savage foes. This is more than we can believe. Though men are credulous, and in many cases capable of deception and imposition, it is impossible for us to be duped and gulled in a case of this nature. The testimony of sense is proof against imposition of this gross complexion.

Now, for the same reason, the Israelites could not be deceived in similar circumstances; for their senses were as bright and good as ours. The Hebrews were never so simple and credulous as to believe that to be true which their eyes and ears declared spurious and false. Hence we conclude, with all the weight of testimony, that the children of Israel were not deceived by Moses at the time of those miraculous actions which his history relates. Never, never was there a Moses who was vain and foolish enough to make such an attempt on the men of Israel. They would have stoned such an impostor to death on the spot.

Leander. The argument is valid; and the illustration is pertinent. The two first criterions will support it forever. The organs of sense will judge and decide: and the decision is permanent. But, sir, how do we know that the history of Moses was not devised and fabricated by artful men, and *post dated*, and palmed upon Israel several hundred years after the specious events? This, if I mistake not, is the plea of infidels. This is their fort.

Infidus.

Infidus. Yes, yes; this is the ground they take; and it is plausible at least: for the impostors of every age have made ancient fictions modern realities.

Clerus. I am sensible they have made the attempt by posterior date to invalidate the history of Moses. But the two last criterions are ample security against any imposition in this direction. What designing men can succeed while they attempt to convince this generation that our ancestors came from England on dry land? For what is the testimony of the American history? What is the language of those monuments and memorials which were erected and instituted to commemorate the arrival of our forefathers? Surely this, in connexion with the Plymouth rock, the century anniversary, and the fond story of our fires and grandfathers in the mouth of every child, prevent all possibility of believing that our ancestors came from Britain in a miraculous manner on dry land. No, my friends; to do this we must instantly disbelieve all we ever believed, unlearn all we ever learned, and swallow millions of lies and absurdities, and be the greatest of all fools and dupes in the world.

Infidus. But how does all this apply to the subject on hand?

Theophilus. The application is easy: for the Hebrews were rational creatures as well as the Americans. If the history of Moses had been an imposition, the laws, customs, monuments, traditions, and all their national concerns, must infallibly have detected it the first moment of its introduction. The novelty of such a complicated imposition must invariably prevent its reception and influence.

Infidus. I don't know but the reasoning is valid; but I do not clearly see it.

Theophilus. We do not plead that men are never the subjects of deception and imposition; for they certainly are in many instances: but we confidently assert that it is impossible to impose upon them so grossly when actions unite and combine the several criterions.

Infidus. I will add no more: for I know it does not follow that men are always capable of being the subjects of imposition, because they are in some instances. There certainly is a little truth existing, though there is much falsehood.

Clarissa. Perhaps I shall be impertinent; but let me ask, whether the same course of reasoning which has been adopted will not authorise the miracles of Papists, and the wonders of Mahomet?

Theophilus. By no means. The miracles of these and all other impostors are destitute of that combination of criterions which prevents deception and imposition. The miracles of Jesuits are but flight-of-hand tricks; and those of Mahomet, that shameless impostor, are but fabulous; for he tells his own won-

drous tale, wholly destitute of public testimony. But he was a liar, and his witness is not admissible.

Clarissa. My objection relative to those impostors is answered: but pray tell us why the Jews reject Christ even to this day: for his divine mission has been established in the preceding conference by the same principle of public testimony which is adopted to establish the divine legation of Moses.

Clerus. Your question is pertinent: and the reply will probably be satisfactory. There is no general rule without an exception. As the Jews were distinguished by God in point of privileges from all other nations, so they have distinguished themselves by many abominations. Agreeably, therefore, to the spirit of prophecy, God has judicially hardened their hearts and blinded their eyes to discredit and reject the Messiah. Even to this day the veil of ignorance and unbelief remains not taken away. The conduct of the Jews in rejecting Christ has the influence of a standing miracle in favour of the inspiration of scripture. To their own cost they are God's witnesses: for his judicial prediction is fulfilled by their constant infidelity.

INFERENCE.

From the view we have taken, in this conference, of the authenticity, genuineness and veracity of the history of Moses, we infer the inspiration of the Old Testament: for miracles are the test of divinity, and the several parts of the book are uniform and harmonious. It is the sole prerogative of the Author of Nature to suspend her laws of regular operations, and produce miraculous events. When God therefore speaks or operates in a special manner, who with impunity can withhold his unre-served confidence? Miracles were the testimonials of Moses and the prophets, Christ and the apostles.

Theophilus. But while the subject of miracles is directly before the conference, I beg leave to ask whether miracles are terminated? Is the day of miracles past? Will men need no other miraculous displays?

Clerus. We neither affirm nor deny. Secret things belong to God. Miracles were introduced to establish the Divine Character, and authenticate the scriptures. To answer these sublime purposes, they were continued several thousand years, till the sacred canon was completed. Seeing, therefore, no miraculous operations have taken place during many centuries, it is safe to conclude that they will not be introduced again before necessary. Let it suffice to remark, that the wheels of nature will make a solemn pause, and the sun and moon stand still, when the cause of truth shall require the aid of these stupendous events.

Lucinda. How consoling the thought, amid all the convulsions of nature, and the revolutions of empires, that the universe
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is constantly under God's direction, and will perfectly answer his eternal purpose! Neither prince nor subject nor insect moves, nor the least leaf vibrates, without his influence. God reigns over all.

Clarissa. Yes, Lucinda; and how satisfactory to find that the evidence of the divine authority of scripture increases in proportion to our carefully examining the subject. The different attitudes in which the argument has been placed have afforded peculiar confidence and delight. The rock of ages on which the temple of Christian faith quietly and safely rests is infinitely firm and glorious. The united efforts of all wicked beings cannot move it.

Clerus. Yes, my young friends, it is; and if the evidence of inspiration brightens on examination, like the rising day, what will be your excuses when we attend to the more sure word of prophecy respecting Christ, from the fall of man to the end of the world? For the evidence derived from prophecy is if possible more convincing than mathematical demonstration. It strikes the mind like the blaze of noon. The blind cannot but see it.

Clarissa. The Lord make us thankful, humble and obedient! for Christ is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

Clerus. But what is the state of Sophia, and several others who belong to the conference? do they not love darkness rather than light? Let us, O let us carry them in the arms of prayer to the throne of Grace, till we hear that they are Christians. Let us pray for souls, and Zion's prosperity, till breath shall fail. The grace of God furnishes ample motives.

[*To be continued.*]

THE DREAM OF A YOUNG LADY OF FAMILY AND EDUCATION.

HAVING unwisely passed the evening in gay company, and polite amusements, I returned to my father's, late at night. After usual exercises, I formally committed myself to the arms of rest, in hopes that God was my friend. But, instead of quiet repose, as will appear by the sequel, my mind was deeply agitated and exercised about eternal things during the night. Finding my strength almost exhausted, by the most affecting dream, I did not leave my chamber in the morning till repeatedly called by the maid. At entering the room, my parents unitedly said, "Child, you are sick;" and were inquisitive to ascertain the cause of my complaint. Instead of directly assigning it, I informed them that I felt rather feeble, but
was

was not sick. After taking a little refreshment, I felt in a measure recruited. The next night I retired early for rest, but experienced the same train of exercises during the common hours of sleep. Not being able to retain any longer, I told it to my sister Montone; and now, by her request, tell it to others, hoping that young persons will be suitably impressed, and derive advantage from the relation.

“ I dreamed that a young lady of my intimate acquaintance, a lovely Christian, made me a visit, for the sake of religious converse. The topics of discourse for some time were various, and our remarks rather desultory, but consonant with the design of the interview. At length, in a very kind and friendly manner, she asked whether I considered it consistent for Christians to attach themselves to parties of pleasure, who are manifestly devoted to dissipation and the polite amusements of the day. My reply corresponded with the design of the question; for the well-directed arrow not only reached my conscience, but deeply penetrated my heart. I felt a peculiar burden, thanked my friend for the interview; but it was neither possible to deface my guilt, nor suppress my tears. I saw my offence; heartily mourned and confessed it: for, in the face of a reproofing conscience, I disengaged my thoughts from the most interesting concerns of religion, and went in a prayerless manner into the circle of vanity and mirth. Before I terminated my confession, she discovered a melting heart. Tears drew tears from each other's eyes. We wept together profusely, being unable for a considerable time to utter a word. She was sorry for me: I was sorry for her, and all other dear Christians whom I had offended; and chiefly that I had dishonoured Christ, and grieved the Holy Spirit. After we had discharged our tears to that degree which enabled us to speak, she opened the fountain again, by saying, ‘O, my dear Fanny, *God pardons you, and I love you.*’ The design of the interview is answered. Farewel; for duty calls me home. God bless and guide you at all times. We shall both be more on our guard for the future: and if we acknowledge God in all our ways, he will direct our paths.”

“ At the departure of my friend, I dreamed of *my great and last change.* The messenger of death came and told me the time of my exit was at hand. Guilty, trembling, and yet hoping that for the sake of the atonement I was the subject of grace, I attempted with submission to the will of Heaven to give death a cordial welcome. At once my sight failed, my heart sunk, I fainted, and died. Short was my passage through the gloomy vale. But, O blessed Jesus, who makes all his followers victorious! the end of life was the end of sin, though I was surprised at a guilty hour. Both bodies of death were dropped together. While I deserved God's wrath for my late offence, I was enabled

bled to dream my soul away into the arms of a convoy of angels, who speedily carried me to Abraham's bosom. But where am I now? my body gone! my sin gone! and gone forever all my temptations and darkness! Here all is light and glory ineffable. On the throne of awful majesty and insupportable brightness I beheld the Saviour of man decked with infinite beauty and splendour. I also saw the angels who stood round the throne preparing their golden harps to announce my arrival. I fell on my face, and was ashamed of my unworthiness; but felt inspired to ascribe honour and glory to God, and to sing, Worthy is the Lamb, who reigns over all. But I dreamed, Is this heaven? Have I left a world of death, and reached the happy regions of immortality! Is this heavenly reality, or is it mere vision? Am I asleep or awake? Do I dream or realize? It is substantial glory, that fadeth not away. It is heaven itself, the residence of God and all his friends. Here God will forever be employed in displaying his perfections; and his friends, with expanding capacities, in reaping the most sublime enjoyment. Millions of ages will constitute but the morning, the mere beginning, of celestial bliss.

"But I pause in my dream, and inquire, Who are here? who are entitled to this unutterable blessedness? Where are the professors of religion who blended themselves with the polite world? are they here? Where those who eagerly embraced the theory of universal salvation? Where those who discarded that charity which seeketh not her own, and believed that self-love is the basis of religion? Where that army of antinomian Christians, who never practised self-denial, and loved Christ merely for the sake of his benefits? Alas! alas! I see only here and there one among the blessed who made no profession of religion on earth; but thousands of professors are absent. While I was thus inquiring, the angelic guide unexpectedly directed me to look down and survey the regions of darkness. I obeyed; and at once saw in torment all those persons whom I could not discover in the realms of light. O, said I, what disappointment awaits many professors at death! While thus employed in contemplating the contrast made by heaven and hell; the songs of saints, and the bitter shrieks of reprobates; I saw great preparations for the day of judgment. At this increasing display of glory and majesty, my soul was filled with reverence, awe and delight: and I awoke, and behold it was a dream. Again I slept, and again I dreamed that my dream was a reality. Again I awoke; and now, while perfectly awake, I am constrained to think that my dream has more of reality in it than empty vision."

INTERPRETATION.

How full of moral distraction is the gay and polite world!
How unwise are some professors, to mingle with the men of the
world

world, and taste their pleasures! How wise the children of God to reprove each other when necessity requires it! How great the change which awaits us all! How glorious is heaven, and how dreadful is hell! How dangerous the profession of religion without the practice! How interesting for all to prepare for death, judgment and eternity! For we know not the termination of life.

SKETCH OF A CONVERSATION BETWEEN MARY AND SOLOMON.

As recollected by EUSEBIUS.

Solomon. **W**ELL, madam, you heard the sermons yesterday; what do you think of such preaching? do you like it?

Mary. Sir, I certainly like it; the sermons were a feast.

Sol. Is it possible? I was really hurt: I do not often hear our minister, and I shall hear him less, if he continues to dwell on such subjects. If God is a *sovereign*, I see not why he should preach, or we hear.

Mary. I am certainly pleased with such preaching, though I may not be able to answer your objections.

Sol. I could never find any body able to answer my objections.

Mary. Pray, Sir, what are they?

Sol. If God be a sovereign, then I say all men are machines, as much as that coach, hurrying it knows not where.

Mary. Then, Sir, I say I have done with divine sovereignty. Free agency is essential to religion, to all praise or blame. But how does it appear that we become machines by admitting divine sovereignty?

Sol. Why it is certain—every thing is fixed—we are machines—we cannot help ourselves.

Mary. But, Sir, you will allow that God governs the world, and that his agency is irresistible; that if any being can disconcert his arrangements, so far, not God, but that being, governs. You will also allow that God foreknows every thing, and therefore that every thing is certainly fixed with God. If any thing can render uncertain his foreknowledge, it is not knowledge, but guessing, and may be called foreguessing. Nothing can be *known*, unless it is past, or a being of Almighty power determined it. As long as it is future, or as long as it is designed only by a creature, it may be prevented by God, and is therefore uncertain. Nothing but the event itself having existed, or the determination of Omnipotence, can make it absolutely certain, or *known*.

Sol.

Sol. Yes, yes, I always allow all these things; but these are not sovereignty.

Mary. If God so govern the world, does he follow the dictates of his own wisdom and judgment, or is he directed by unforeseen circumstances, by the feelings and wishes of creatures?

Sol. Doubtless he follows his own judgment and wisdom, for they are infinitely superior to the opinions of men and angels.

Mary. But, Sir, this is all our minister means by the sovereignty of God. *It is God's governing all things according to his own will.*

Sol. Do you really think so? Whatever he means, I am sure sovereignty destroys our agency. I cannot like it.

Mary. But let us be candid, sir, and examine two or three particulars. It is evident that Peter's denial of his Lord was according to the sovereign arrangements of God. It was certain; it was fixed beforehand, for it was *foretold*. But was not Peter free and voluntary? did he not weep and condemn himself as wicked? So the crucifixion of Jesus Christ was a display of sovereign authority. Christ was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. It was fixed, it was determined or decreed by God, as well as foreknown; but surely the murderers of Jesus Christ acted freely: they acted wickedly: they were not machines. It is also said that the hearts of kings are in the hands of the Lord; that he turneth them as the rivers of water are turned. This is the sovereign authority of God; but are kings machines? do they lose their free agency by their office? are they not accountable like other men? Pharaoh was an instrument of displaying the sovereignty of God. God disposed of him according to his own pleasure. In view of the most awful events, God says, For these very purposes have I raised thee up. But was Pharaoh a machine? did he himself ever plead this as his excuse? did any other person ever dream of pleading such an excuse for him? If God has really acted as a sovereign in these particular instances without turning the persons into machines, why may he not act as a sovereign in all cases?

Sol. To be sure all this seems plausible; but decrees are not so easily justified; they take away all blame from the creature.

Mary. Perhaps not, as the instances just mentioned may illustrate. We have seen that the death of Jesus Christ was decreed. "The Son of Man goeth, as it was determined." "He was delivered by the determinate counsel of God." Yet scripture asserts that he was slain by *wicked* hands. Accordingly God has punished Jerusalem and the Jewish nation in a most terrible manner. If this event was decreed, and yet the agents wicked, why may it not be so with all events? It is equally evident that Pharaoh fulfilled the decrees of heaven; for God
says,

says, For this purpose have I raised thee up. His purpose or decree was therefore fulfilled ; but was not Pharaoh *wicked* ? Then why may not other things be decreed, and yet men be wicked in accomplishing those things ?

Sol. If these things *are* true, they ought not to be preached ; they disturb and offend many. Such ministers are imprudent.

Mary. They may be imprudent, but are they not honest ? Must they consult God, or man ? Must they model their sermons according to our wishes, or the word of God ? If the opinions of their hearers afford them a standard of preaching, then the Bible is useless to them. They can ascertain the opinions of their people, and conform to them, as easily without the Bible as with it.

Sol. You talk well ; but I do not like these things. The story of Jacob and Esau, of the labourers, who received every man full wages, though a part had wrought only one hour, are mysteries to me. I wish ministers would let these things alone.

Mary. Possibly, Sir, your opposition is more against your Maker than your minister ; possibly you are fighting against God ; it may be you are injuring your own soul. Have you not some reason to think that many of your neighbours, against whose doctrines you object, really enjoy their Bibles, and public worship, and all religious services, more than you do ?

Sol. I have often thought so ; this perplexes and troubles me. I would give all the world I could feel as I think some persons do. I thank you for your freedom, and hope we shall all find the right way to heaven.

AN ALLEGORY.

" Non ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco."

VIRGIL.

HAPPENING the other day to see a poor foreigner in the agony of a paralytic fit, I was led to reflect on that rare disposition to afford relief, where no recompense is expected. His condition was truly piteous. He lay prostrate on the earth, sheltered only by the azure canopy above. Numbers collected around him ; yet neither father, nor mother, nor brother, nor sister, nor friend, appeared.

These reflections so deeply impressed my mind, that, when I retired to rest, the phantoms of sleep came thick about me. I fancied myself travelling in a broad road, in which were multitudes of every age, sex and character, some going one way, and some another. Some hastened their journey ; while others busied themselves in picking up stones, and throwing them different

ferent ways, regardless of the approaching night. I had not proceeded far before my limbs began to refuse their office, and my spirits to falter on account of the roughness of the way and the intense heat of the sun, which was then scarcely supportable. Luckily I descried at a small distance an arbour, under which lay two men apparently asleep. Quickening my pace thither, I soon arrived, and sat down under its refreshing shade. After I had wiped the sweat from my face, and fanned myself with some small boughs, I discovered just before me a little stream, issuing from the side of a rock. I no sooner approached it, than SELFISHNESS, one of the persons lying on the ground, whose name was written on his forehead in very legible characters, waked, and demanded why I had thus encroached on their exclusive right. Being much fatigued, said I modestly, I came hither to refresh and cool myself, without intending any injury. I now only wish to drink of this pure water. What is that to me? replied he scornfully. At this instant came up a pensive widow, with her tender offspring, and eagerly sought to allay their thirst. By cries and petitions they had almost prevailed upon Selfishness, when his brother, OBDURACY, rose from sleep, and with a frown bade them all begone. Finding that all entreaties for them were fruitless, I only gave vent to my swelling heart, and so left the place.

As I went on my way, the sun gradually lost his influence over the thirsty earth by the rise of a cloud, which darkened the western hemisphere. To find shelter from the approaching tempest was then my first object. Whither to fly I knew not. At length a lofty and spacious house presented itself to my view. Thither I gladly ran. But, when I arrived, how great was my disappointment! Its walls were of adamant, and its doors were barred with iron. I knocked, but none answered nor opened to me. The cracking thunder and flashes of lightning over my head seemed to threaten immediate destruction. Terror seized my soul. What added horror to the scene was, the screeches of women and children, who with me knocked, but found no admittance.

In the midst of my distress, one took me by the arm, and led me away in great haste. His name, as I was afterwards informed, was BENEVOLENCE. This house, said he, is the habitation of MALEVOLENCE, and of his sons, MOROSENESS, CRUELTY, SELFISHNESS, and OBDURACY. They are the invincible descendants of Ishmael, and never afford relief to any. From the dome of my house, where my sons continually watch, I saw your plight, and therefore came for your protection. These words revived my drooping spirits, and administered healing balm.

As

As soon as we reached his abode, COMPASSION, his oldest daughter, opened the door, and bade me walk in. My reception here far exceeded expectation. After she had seated me in the parlour, I began to apologize for the meanness of my dress. But the generous landlord interrupted me, and said, Dress is nothing with us. We estimate characters only by intrinsic worth. This house is the patrimony of our great ancestor, who expressly declared in his will, that it should be opened to weary and distressed travellers of every description. Therefore dismiss thy cares, welcome guest. I was about to offer him my grateful acknowledgment, when the joy I felt within dispelled the visions of my head, and thus I awoke.

C.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

THE following information concerning the state of Religion, throughout the greater part of the United States, is from the most respectable and correct source, and must give great pleasure and encouragement to the friends of evangelical truth and piety.

THE General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church meet annually, in May, usually in Philadelphia, and is composed of delegates from the presbyteries in all the states west and south of New-England, and of representatives from the General Association in Connecticut.

It is the practice of this respectable body (a practice very useful, & highly to be commended) to spend a day, or more if necessary, in free conversation on the state of religion within their bounds; and in order that a result may be formed, in a general and connected report, to be laid before the Assembly, a committee is appointed to take notes of the information as it is communicated, and to prepare the report.

At the meeting of the Assembly in May last, the members were called upon in the order of the roll, and communicated such information on the general state of religion as their local circumstances enabled them to give; and some interesting details were given by the delegates from the General Association of Connecticut respecting the state of religion in that state and its vicinity. The following is the report of the committee:—

“THE Assembly heard, at more than usual length, and with more than common satisfaction, the accounts received from their members of the state of religion within the bounds of the Presbyterian Church. Since an inquiry of this nature has become a part of the annual business of the Assembly, it may be confidently asserted that no result was ever presented to our body so favourable, and so gratifying to the friends of truth and piety.

“There

“ There is scarcely a presbytery under the care of the Assembly, from which some pleasing intelligence has not been announced ; and from some of them communications have been made, which so illustriously display the triumphs of evangelic truth, and the power of sovereign grace, as cannot but fill with joy the hearts of all who love to hear of the prosperity of the Redeemer’s kingdom.

“ In most of the northern and eastern presbyteries, revivals of religion, of a more or less general nature, have taken place. In these revivals, the work of Divine Grace has proceeded, with a few exceptions, in the usual way. Sinners have been convinced and converted by the *still small voice* of the Holy Spirit, and have been brought out of darkness into marvellous light, and from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God, *without any remarkable bodily agitations, or extraordinary affections*. In this calm and ordinary manner many hundreds have been added to the church in the course of the last year ; and multitudes of those who had before joined themselves to the Lord have experienced times of refreshing and consolation from his presence.

“ In many of the southern and western presbyteries, revivals more extensive, and of a more extraordinary nature, have taken place. While many, within the bounds of those presbyteries, have been, as is hoped, effectually called, without any exercises other than those which have generally attended the progress of vital piety, there have been multitudes of instances in which *great bodily agitations*, and other circumstances out of the usual course of religious exercise, have attended the work. As these extraordinary appearances have been before announced by the Assembly, and as the knowledge of them is generally diffused throughout the American churches, it is not judged necessary to enter into minute details on the subject. The Assembly would only observe, that, although they forbear to express any opinion as to the origin and nature of some of those circumstances which have attended the southern and western revivals, and which have attracted so much of the attention of the religious world, yet they are constrained to acknowledge, with thankfulness, that the last year, while it presented a continuance and great extension of this extraordinary work, furnished also increasing evidence that it is indeed the work of God ; for which the friends of piety are bound to praise his holy name.

“ The Assembly cannot believe that a dispensation, by means of which the ignorant are enlightened, the vicious reclaimed, the erroneous made to acknowledge and obey the truth as it is in Jesus, the haughty infidel humbled, and brought to bow
“ penitent

“ penitent and believing before the cross of Christ, and the general aspect of society changed from dissoluteness and profanity to sobriety, order, and comparative purity, can be any other than a dispensation of the grace of God. And as there appears to be growing evidence that these are the happy fruits of the above-mentioned remarkable work, the Assembly cannot hesitate to recognize in it the same Divine Power which has in every age appeared, in a greater or smaller degree, to build up Zion, to confound the wisdom of this world, and to shew that, when the great Head of the Church will work, none can hinder him.—It would be easy for the Assembly to select some very remarkable instances of the triumphs of Divine Grace, which were exhibited before them in the course of the very interesting narratives presented in the free conversation—instances of the most malignant opposers of vital piety being convinced and reconciled—of some learned, active and conspicuous infidels becoming the signal monuments of that grace which once they despised—and various circumstances which display the holy efficacy of the gospel. But, forbearing to enter into minute details on this subject, they would only in general declare, that, in the course of the last year, there is reason to believe that several thousands, within the bounds of the presbyterian church, have been brought to embrace the gospel of Christ, and large accessions of zeal and strength, as well as of members, given to his people.

“ The Assembly were gratified to be informed, that, even in those parts of our church where no remarkable revivals have occurred, the word and ordinances of the gospel have been, in many places, more generally and more seriously attended upon, in the course of the last year, than for some time before; that infidelity is less bold and active than formerly; and that, on the whole, appearances have become more encouraging since the last conversation in the Assembly on this subject.

“ The Assembly consider it as worthy of particular attention, that most of the accounts of revivals communicated to them stated, that the institution of praying societies, or seasons of special prayer to God for the out-pouring of the Spirit, generally preceded the remarkable displays of Divine Grace with which our land has been recently favoured. In most cases, preparatory to signal effusions of the Holy Ghost, the pious have been stirred up to cry fervently and importunately, that God would appear to vindicate his own cause. The Assembly see in this a confirmation of the word of God, and an ample encouragement of the prayers and hopes of the pious for future and more extensive manifestations of divine power. And they trust that the churches under their care, while they

“ see

“ see cause of abundant thankfulness for this dispensation, will
“ also perceive, that it presents new motives to zeal and fer-
“ vour in applications to that Throne of Grace from which
“ every good and perfect gift cometh.

“ The Assembly also observed, with great pleasure, that the
“ desire of spreading the gospel among the destitute inhabi-
“ tants on our frontiers, among the blacks, and among the
“ savage tribes on our borders, has been rapidly increasing,
“ during the last year, in various parts of our church. The
“ Assembly take notice of this circumstance with the more satis-
“ faction, as it not only affords a pleasing presage of the spread
“ of the gospel, but also furnishes agreeable evidence of the
“ genuineness, and the benign tendency, of that spirit which
“ God has been pleased to pour out upon his people.

“ The Assembly consider the prospects of our church in the
“ frontier settlements as more favourable than they have been
“ at the date of any former report. They are gratified to
“ hear, from various quarters, that new churches are rapidly
“ forming, increasing in the number of their members, and in
“ their punctual attendance on the means of grace; that many
“ of these churches have been, within a short period, supplied
“ with stated pastors; and that more missionary labourers are
“ called for, in the above mentioned settlements, than any ar-
“ rangements heretofore made can possibly supply.

“ Information of a very pleasing nature was also communi-
“ cated to the Assembly, by the delegates from the General As-
“ sociation of Connecticut, of a work of Divine Grace in vari-
“ ous parts of that state, especially in Yale college; in which
“ important institution many of the youth have hopefully be-
“ come pious. The probable influence of such an event, in so
“ respectable a seminary of learning, on the church of Christ
“ generally, and particularly in the state of Connecticut, cannot
“ but make a very pleasing impression on the friends of piety.

“ On the whole, the Assembly cannot but declare, with joy,
“ and with the most cordial congratulations to the churches
“ under their care, that the state and prospect of vital religion
“ in our country are more favourable and encouraging than at
“ any period within the last forty years. They see, indeed,
“ much to lament, in the infidelity, the vice, the profaneness,
“ the lukewarmness and formality, which still in many places
“ abound: but they believe it would be ingratitude to the gra-
“ cious Head of the church, as well as injustice to the friends
“ of religion, not to announce, that the aspect of our American
“ Zion is, in general, unusually cheering; and that those who
“ feel interested in the advancement of the Redeemer's king-
“ dom, while they are called upon by new and additional mo-
“ tives to implore the continuance and extension of his mercy,
“ have

“ have abundant reason to be encouraged, and to rejoice in the
 “ hope that God will make still more rich and glorious displays
 “ of his power and grace, ‘ until he establish Jerusalem, and
 “ make her a name and a praise in the earth—until the righ-
 “ teousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation
 “ thereof as a lamp that burneth.”

*Extract from a letter from the Rev. Thomas Moore to his Father,
 Deacon Israel Moore, of Stirling, dated Ten-Mile (Pennsylvania,
 over the Alleghany mountains) March 9th, 1803.*

“ I SHALL now leave every other matter, and give you
 some account of the present extraordinary appearance of
 a revival of religion amongst us. It carries in it all the singu-
 larities that attended the revival which was in Kentucky lately,
 that which took place in Northampton under Mr. Edwards,
 and that which prevailed in Scotland about sixty years ago.
 This awakening began in the Ohio presbytery, in a congrega-
 tion under the pastoral care of the Rev. Elisha M’Curdy, some
 time in the month of August or September last; and is now
 spread into almost all our congregations. The persons who
 are struck, as we call it, are generally first observed to pay close
 attention to the preaching; then to weep and shed tears plen-
 tifully for a while; after this a twitching or jerking seizes
 them, and they fall to the ground helpless, and convulsed
 through their whole frame, as if in the agonies of death. In
 this situation they frequently lie for hours. One within my
 knowledge lay upwards of sixty hours. During this time they
 are generally greatly convulsed, groan heavily, and cry out as
 in the greatest distress. Sometimes they lie apparently breath-
 less for some minutes, from five to twenty. In this situation
 pulsation is sometimes perceptible, sometimes not. Almost
 every appearance of life leaves them. When it returns, some
 are observed to acquire breath merely, still remaining convulsed.
 Others are able immediately to rise, and walk. In the begin-
 ning of this awakening it was common for those who fell, after
 they had been lying for a while, to speak in an astonishing man-
 ner, as to the length of time, matter, and loudness of voice.
 Some of the most powerful sermons I ever heard from mortals,
 came from the mouths of persons of the above description, un-
 able to help themselves. Some have spoken almost without
 cessation for the space of five hours, and some part of the time
 so loud, that they might be heard at the distance of a mile.
 It appeared as difficult for them to refrain from speaking, as it
 would be to a person, under great bodily distress, to refrain from
 groaning. When entreated, both by ministers and people, to
 withhold, they would say that they could not. Some of them
 would try; but, in a minute or two, it would burst forth from
 them

them like a torrent. The cry has often been so great for a while that there was no such thing as ministers being heard in preaching or exhorting. When this was the case, they would stop a while, till the torrent of the cry should be over. Their great cry was, *their great guilt and danger—their hard heart—their sin and criminality—that they should die—that they should be damned forever—that God would be infinitely just in sending them directly to hell.* They would frequently say, *I deserve hell, but O how can I bear it!* One little boy in my congregation, one night, was crying bitterly. O, said he, *I am lost forever. I am going right down to hell. O, I see hell, and the breath of the Lord like a stream of brimstone kindling it.* At another time he said, *What an old sinner I am! I have lived eleven years in sin.* Under these views and feelings they have exhorted sinners, in the strongest terms, to come to Christ. They warn them not to live in sin so long as they have done; and say, *If I must go to hell, I don't want you to go with me. I want to go all alone.* In the beginning of the awakening there was much more of this than what there now is. Few now are heard calling on others to repent, as formerly they did: yet much crying, groaning and convulsion attend them. Since the awakening first entered my congregation, as many as one hundred and twenty persons have fallen: others are much exercised about their souls who do not fall. The work does still increase among my people, and in other congregations. But few in my congregation have as yet obtained any hope. They who have fallen, still keep falling: frequently at meeting, sometimes at home, and sometimes on their way home from meeting. The work is truly astonishing to every beholder. After all that I can tell you, were you to see it, you would say that the one half was not told you. It is evident beyond all dispute that the work is of God. It takes persons of all ranks, and ages, from the age of seven, to that of a hundred. One of one hundred and one years of age, in Mr. M'Curdy's congregation, is supposed lately to have become religious. Some cavil against the work; and others call it by the worst of names. Yet how does it become all to be cautious what they say, lest haply they be found even to fight against God! O that the Lord would soon visit in like manner the people in your parish, in the town round you, in every quarter of our land, and fill the earth with his glory!

ORDAINED—The Rev. JOSEPH EMERSON, to the pastoral care of the Third Church in Beverly, in the new meeting-house lately dedicated with religious solemnities to the worship of God. The performances were introduced by a pertinent and solemn address to the crowded assembly by the Rev. Mr. Hopkins of Salem; introductory prayer by the Rev. Mr. Kellog, of Framingham;

Framingham; sermon, by the Rev. Dr. Emmons, of Franklin, from Eph. iii. 10—*To the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord*: consecrating prayer, by the Rev. Mr. Spring, of Newburyport; charge, by the Rev. Dr. Dana, of Ipswich; fellowship of the churches, by the Rev. Mr. Worcester, of Salem; concluding prayer, by the Rev. Mr. Bailey, of Ward.

P O E T R Y.

LORD'S DAY MORNING.

A WAKE my heart! my soul, arise!
This is the day believers prize;
Improve this sabbath then with care:
Another may not be thy share.

O solemn thought! Lord give me
pow'r

Wisely to fill up every hour:
O for the wings of faith and love
To bear my heart and soul above!

Jesus, assist, nor let me fail
To worship thee within the veil;
To glorify thy matchless grace,
To see the beauties of thy face.

Go with me to thy house to-day,
And tune my heart to praise and pray:
Like dew command thy word to fall,
Refreshing, quick'ning, saving all.

Call forth my thoughts, and let them
rove

O'er the green pastures of thy love;
O let not sin prevent my rest,
Nor keep me from my Saviour's breast.

Give to thy church a large increase,
Send her prosperity and peace;
May all the saints in Zion say,
O happy, happy, happy day!

SONGS IN THE NIGHT.

RENOUNCING THE WORLD.

TELL me no more of earthly toys,
Of sinful mirth, and carnal joys,
The things I lov'd before:
Let me but view my Saviour's face,
And feel his animating grace,
And I desire no more.

Tell me no more of praise and wealth,
Tell me no more of ease and health,
For these have all their snares:
Let me but know my sins forgiven,
But see my name enroll'd in heaven,
And I am free from cares.

Tell me no more of lofty tow'rs,
Delightful gardens, fragrant bow'rs,
For these are trifling things:
The little room for me design'd
Will suit as well my easy mind,
As palaces of kings.

Tell me no more of crowding guests,
Of sumptuous feasts and gaudy dresses,
Extravagance and waste:
My little table, only spread
With wholesome herbs and wholesome
bread,
Will better suit my taste

Give me the Bible in my hand,
A heart to read and understand,
And faith to trust the Lord:
I'd sit alone from day to day,
Nor urge my company to stay,
Nor wish to rove abroad.

SONGS IN THE NIGHT.

ON THE DOMESTIC HAPPINESS OF A CHRISTIAN COUPLE.

HOW blest the pair whom Chris-
tian love unites!

Joy smiles upon their days, and crowns
their nights;

In peace their happy moments glide
away,

Till both are welcom'd to eternal day.

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